

From Bubbles Below Scuba Charters <kaimanu@aloha.net>



Sent Wednesday, October 13, 2010 2:35 pm

To hihwmanagementplan@noaa.gov

Subject comments on management plan for enlarging humpback whale sanctuary

name: Linda Marsh

date 10/13/10

Re: comments for proposal to expand whale sanctuary

Dear NOAA, I know that we are seeing more whales circulating around the Hawaiian Islands. Data was given out and it appears that the humpbacks are doing good in their population. I do not see any reason to increase more waters for the whales. They go where they wish right now. Thats fine. Boating traffic has not been shown to negatively impact them, here in the Hawaiian Islands.

I do not see why we should include turtles as they are doing exceptionally well with the current status of being a threatened species. I do not think they should be taken off that list as their sexually maturation is so long, they deserve continued protection as is currently happening. if NOAA wishes to help the marine life and the economics of the island this is what should be done.

There should be more grants available to study and implement several conservation programs around Kauai. First one: coral replanting after storms. Kauai has the largest and oldest pocillopora eydouxi coral trees found on any of the main Hawaiian Islands. The coral heads are besot with disease, actually several as noted by Greta Abbey and Thierry Works) as well as a new one which is killing the base of the coral trees with the live branches then breaking off. These branches have a very high survival rate when cemented on lava. Our hands appear to be tied as our Coral Ecologist, Dave Gulko, who doesn't dive in Hawaiian waters does not agree that there is even coral disease present here. His ignorance is continuing the death of our coral, as we are not able to get permits and of course funding. A replanting project as has been done even in Oahu after the navy ship was grounded is proving to be successful just of huge scope. We need a continuing coral replanting project here on Kauai. I strongly urge this type of project to pay local diving professionals to participate. That way, you have the residents "owning" the project, the government is injecting the \$\$ directly into the local economy, the corals get to start a new life and Kauai will benefit with more coral coverage underwater continuing to enlarge that habitat and food source instead of its continuing diminishing quality and ability to protect other species. The second thing the whale sanctuary can do for the community of Kauai is that they can solicit for legislation to "cover your dirt" Hundreds of acres of land is left fallow or dug up and left and the wind simply blows the topsoil into the ocean "silting out our coral heads". This agricultural practice is more detrimental to coral than any other human aspect including anchor drops and herbicides. If NOAA would help somehow bring about awareness and perhaps legislation to stop this practice, our coral would stand a chance.

The humpback whale sanctuary is really about education. Thats fine. However, unless we are all going to be given government jobs then there should be no competition with local businesses whose livelihood depends upon the interest of visitors to be educated and safely introduced to the ocean environment. Do not consider killing or hampering jobs made by small businesses to enlarge the sanctuary unless there is a plan to have a very large staff. Its fine to have a resource center for the population who is disabled, or can't seem to get safely on a vessel for one reason or another. Otherwise allow the education to be paid for by visitors and have the \$\$ go directly in the local economy supporting small business. We really can't all work for the government.

Summary: No to expand the whale sanctuary. No to expand the sanctuay to include all islands and all the way around the islands out to 100 fathoms. Monk Seals are on the decline. However, our incidental encounters with monk seals should not be taken as an offense to them. They actually do not act as tho they care if we are respectful. I worked on Midway Island and the closure of 1/2 to 3/4 of the islands beaches with the thought of zero invasiveness was stupid. The seals go to where there is activity as they are, after all, mammals. I worry that the sanctuary will become too heavy handed in fining divers/snorkelers/educators about this incredible rare sighting. Isn't it true that with the male re-location program we ended up with females going to where the males are? So we now have more monk seals on Kauai and Niihau then ever before, and it was induced by the government intervention. Plain and simple, we just still do not know how to help them, to include them at this point is a knee jerk reaction, not science. No to expanding to include sea turtles or dolphins. Why is Hawaiian Cultural being considered as being added into the whale sanctuary? Frankly, our haole children have a local culture with out a real "home" I think we should include them somehow too! maybe a section on local culture as it is today, the racial pot that never

really mixes, we just endure.

No to a vessel speed limit during whale season. There is no evidence that this is a problem here except with the military who gee get to have a "take" amount. How about NO to further bombing of Kaula Rock???? How about NO to sonar testing by the military, and their associated defense contractors? NO to super cavitation subs being tested without permits at Niihau and Lehua. Even the Governor had a say so in what was tested for in the dead fish when we had the fish kill last year.

NO take zones is not the answer though we do need further conservation efforts. I would recommend a type of kapu system where it is a cycle of rotating no take zones, or certain species. Though this would have continued dialog between the residents and the department who becomes designated to oversee it. I am opposed to too much administration cost. The best enforcement is one where everyone benefits by education of doing the right thing even when no one is there to ticket. Yeah, we have our share of idiots and bozos, but the rest of us collectively are very respectful. In the long run, there would be good compliance I believe.

Sorry but I hate RIMPAC, Honolulu small businesses love it, they get all the \$\$\$\$ from it, we get all the environmental hits. RIMPAC sucks for the marine life. I believe that NOAA should have us do assessments and fish counts on the reef off of Mana while the military games are being played. One season, and there would be enough evidence of disruptive marine ecosystem for perhaps to be considered as substantial evidence.

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